

Message Text

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ACTION AGRE-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-11 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00
STR-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 AID-05 /079 W
-----088097 130626Z /12

R 121155Z SEP 78
FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6681
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO POUCH

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DEPARTMENT PASS MCCONNELL/FAS/USDA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, BR
SUBJECT: BRAZILIAN COFFEE

REF: (A) BRASILIA 6604
(B) BRASILIA 6622

1. THIS MESSAGE WAS PREPARED BY FAS COFFEE SPECIALIST LEON
YALLOUZ, AND CONTAINS FIELD OBSERVATIONS AND AN EVALUATION
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OF THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY FROST DURING THE WEEK OF AUGUST 14
TO BRAZIL'S COFFEE PRODUCTION POTENTIAL FOR THE 1979 HARVEST.
DURING THIS TRIP, AUGUST 28-SEPTEMBER 8, OVER 4,000 KILOMETERS
WERE COVERED IN THE COFFEE PRODUCING AREAS OF PARANA, SAO PAULO
AND MINAS GERAIS.

2. UNLIKE THE 1975 FREEZE THAT AFFECTED ALL COFFEE TREES IN

NORTHERN PARANA AND WESTERN SAO PAULO, THE AUGUST 14, 1978 FREEZE LEFT IN ITS PATH A MOST UNUSUAL MOSIAC PATTERN OF DAMAGE REGARDLESS OF COFFEE TREES' AGE OR LOCATION; THAT IS, WHETHER FACING SOUTH OR NOT AND WHETHER IN THE LOW LAND OR NOT. OVER FIFTY PERCENT OF PARANA COFFEE TREES OF VARIOUS AGES WERE AFFECTED TO VARIOUS DEGREES BY THE FREEZE. THE HEAVIEST DAMAGE IN NUMBER OF TREES AND INTENSITY OF THE FREEZE WAS OBSERVED NORTHWEST, WEST AND SOUTHWEST OF MARINGA. THE INTENSITY AND EXTENSION OF THE FREEZE DAMAGE GRADUALLY DIMINISHES EAST OF MARINGA TOWARD OURINHOS. DURING OUR FIELD TRIP OF AUGUST 3-15, JUST BEFORE THE FREEZE, WE ESTIMATED PARANA PRODUCTION POTENTIAL FOR THE 1979 HARVEST AT 6 TO 7 MILLION BAGS. THIS ESTIMATE IS NOW REDUCED TO A RANGE OF 3.5 TO 4.5 MILLION BAGS.

3. IN THE STATE OF SAO PAULO THE AREA MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY THE FREEZE IS LOCATED ON A STRIP SIXTY KILOMETERS WIDE RUNNING EAST-WEST BETWEEN THE TOWNS OF BAURU AND DRACENA. SCATTERED FIELDS OF AFFECTED COFFEE TREES IN SAO PAULO WERE OBSERVED AS FAR NORTH AS ALTINOPOLIS, FRANCA AND SAO JOSE DO RIO PRETO AND AS FAR WEST AS MOGI-NIRIM. OUR ESTIMATE OF SAO PAULO PRODUCTION POTENTIAL RANGE, BEFORE THE FREEZE, WAS 8 TO 8.5 MILLION BAGS, AND WE ARE NOT REDUCING IT TO 5.5 TO 6.0 MILLION BAGS.

4. THE EFFECT OF THE FREEZE IN MINAS GERAIS COFFEE TREES IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT SIGNIFICANT. WE ESTIMATE THAT LESS THAN 5 PERCENT OF SOUTHWEST MINAS COFFEE TREES WERE AFFECTED BY THE FREEZE. OUR OFFICIAL FORECAST FOR MINAS PRODUCTION POTENTIAL FOR THE 1979; COFFEE HARVEST WAS 7 TO 7.5 MILLION BAGS BEFORE THE FREEZE. THIS ESTIMATE IS NOW REDUCTED TO 6.5 TO 7.5 MILLION BAGS. COFFEE TREES IN THE STATE OF MATO GROSSO ARE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY THE FREEZE. WE ARE THEREFORE REDUCING THE PRODUCTION POTENTIAL ESTIMATE FOR ALL OTHER COFFEE PRODUCING STATES FROM 3 MILLION BAGS TO A RANGE OF 2.5 AND 3 MILLION BAGS.

5. WE THEREFORE CURRENTLY BELIEVE THAT THE SIZE OF BRAZIL'S 1979 COFFEE HARVEST SHOULD BE WITHIN THE RANGE OF 18 TO 21 MILLION BAGS PROVIDED THAT FAVORABLE WEATHER FACTORS CONTINUE TO PREVAIL UNTIL MARCH/APRIL OF 1979. BEFORE THE FREEZE OUR OFFICIAL FORECAST WAS FOR A POTENTIAL OF 24 TO 26 MILLION BAGS. AN IMPORTANT OBSERVATION TO BE REGISTERED HERE IS THAT ALL COFFEE TREES AFFECTED BY THIS YEAR'S FREEZE WILL VERY LIKELY RECOVER TO FULL PRODUCTION CAPACITY AFTER THE 1979 HARVEST.

6. GENERAL AND GENEROUS FERTILIZER AND PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS

TO COFFEE TREES WERE OBSERVED IN ALL THREE STATES. MOST
FARMERS ARE HOLDING THEIR COFFEE OFF THE MARKET AWAITING FOR
HIGHER PRICES. IBC IS REPORTED TO HAVE PURCHASED FROM GROWERS
BETWEEN MAY 31 AND AUGUST 11, 1978 ABOUT 3 MILLION BAGS.
DEXTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COFFEE, CROP DESTRUCTION, REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978RIODE04065
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780371-1108
Format: TEL
From: RIO DE JANEIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780976/aaaaclan.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 96ce5b52-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AGRE
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BRASILIA 6604, 78 BRASILIA 6622
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1466907
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRAZILIAN COFFEE
TAGS: EAGR, BR, (YALLOUZ, LEON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/96ce5b52-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014